THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Diversion of forest land

2097. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Karnataka has been requesting the Central Government for diverting forest land in Karnataka;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether due to non-release of forest land, the State has been put in a precarious situation to dispose of hazardous waste; and

(d) if so, the alternative measures taken to grant approval to the State Government to dispose of hazardous wastes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Central Government receives request from Government of Karnataka for diversion of forest land under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, for development projects like power, transmission lines, roads, railways, irrigation, mining, drinking water etc., from time to time. A total of 530 such projects involving about 37,890 hectare of forest land have been approved by the Central Government under the Act.

(c) No, Sir, Central Government has already approved a proposal in October, 2002, for diversion of 50 hectare of forest land for disposal of hazardous wastes in favour of Karnataka State Pollution Control Board in Kolar District, Karnataka. No other proposal from the State Government has been received for diversion of forest land for disposal of hazardous wastes by the Central Government.

(d) Does not arise.

Hurdles in achieving target for forest cover

2098. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY:
SHRI G.K. VASAN:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there were hurdles in achieving the target of 33 per cent forest and tree cover by 2012;

(b) if so, the steps being taken by Government to overcome these hurdles;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Government require an annual investment of Rs. 8,000 crores and effective public-private participation; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) As per the State of Forest Report, 2003, the forest and tree cover of the country is 23.68% of its total geographical area wherein the assessment of new plantations of 5 to 10 years have not figured as they can not be captured through satellite images. To achieve the target of 33 per cent of the forest cover by 2012, non-forest areas are to be covered under forest and tree cover with the help of State Forest Departments, different Ministries, voluntary agencies, community based organizations and public-private partnerships. This requires an additional financial resource mobilization. The Ministry of Environment and Forests has prepared a National Forestry Action Plan (NFAP), which is a 20-year perspective plan to reverse the process of forest degradation and to work for sustainable development of forests.

(c) The National Forestry Action Plan (NFAP) prepared in 1999, envisages that a total investment of Rs. 1,33,902.80 crores is required over the 20 years period, or Rs. 6695.14 crores per year. The achievement of target of 33% forest and tree cover would require mass participation including public-private partnership.

(d) Ministry of Environment and Forests has commissioned Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal to prepare a draft model Multi-stakeholder Partnership (MSP) framework involving State Government, local community and private sector, for regeneration of degraded lands through afforestation.